

“British-bird” students who find in these alien immigrants a great cause of perplexity. To whatever country we go, we are, perhaps before we have well ascertained the number of the *bonâ fide* species, puzzled by some wanderer turning up exactly where he was least wanted. In my own opinion, the ornithologist must accept his position with all its responsibilities; he chooses to study a class of beings, some of whom, for all sublunary purposes at least, are blest with almost infinite powers of locomotion. He must therefore not complain if in the course of a morning’s walk here in England, an Australian Swift flies in his face, or he picks up a dead Crossbill of a Transatlantic species; and he must invoke no *Deus ex machina* in the shape of an auxiliary-screw clipper or a careless aviary-keeper to account for the incident. Facts like these hardly admit of a doubt, and force themselves day by day more and more upon the notice of the thoughtful naturalist. For some time, indeed, European ornithologists have been accustomed to regard the properly authenticated appearance of an exotic species, which there may be good reason to suppose to have reached our shores without intentional human aid, as sufficient ground for including it in the list of our birds. But as observers have of late so largely increased, so have these occurrences been more frequently noticed; and it seems absolutely necessary to prescribe some limit to prevent our really native species from being outnumbered by these foreigners. The difficulty is to know where to draw the line; and to this point I would invite the careful consideration of naturalists. It may be all very well to call *Thalassidroma Wilsoni* and *Mergus cucullatus* European birds; but because a single individual of *Regulus calendulus* or *Dendroica virens* has reached the Old World, it is absurd to include either of those species in its Fauna. I cite these instances because they are all from that continent whence most of our occasional visitants arrive—so much so, that one is almost driven to the conclusion that there is no *primâ facie* reason why examples of the greater number of birds of Eastern North America should not, *favente zephyro* (the prevailing strong wind in Western Europe), make their appearance on our shores in course of time. Then, on the other hand, the last two additions to the list of so-called “British birds” have been from the opposite quarter. Are *Syrnhaptes paradoxus* and *Xema ichthyaëtus* to take their places in the books elucidating British Ornithology by the side of the Red Grouse and the Peewit Gull? It appears to me that we gain nothing by deferring a decision on the subject, and I trust that these remarks will not be deemed unnecessary by those who are competent to deal with the matter.

Elveden, 28 February, 1860.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW GENUS OF BOIDÆ DISCOVERED BY
MR. BATES ON THE UPPER AMAZON. BY DR. J. E. GRAY.

Fam. BOIDÆ.

CHRYSENIS, n. g.

Head rather large, rather depressed, covered with scales, the front half covered with small symmetrical shields, as follows:—two pair

in an arched series behind the rostral and nasal, and four pair forming a ring round the pair of small central frontal shields; loreal shields two; eyes surrounded by a series of small shields, with a series of four or five small superciliary shields above them; forehead, crown, and cheeks covered with small granular scales; rostral plate with a pit on each edge; upper labial shields low, with a large deep pit on their hinder edge; front lower labial shields simple, high, the hinder short, with a very deep pit on the hinder edge of each of them; nostrils situate between two moderately sized, nearly equal nasal shields; pupils erect, oblong; body compressed, rounded above and below; tail conical, with a single series of subcaudal plates.

This genus resembles *Epicrates* as to the shields on the muzzle, but differs in the distinctness and form of the pits on the labial shields.

CHRYSENIS BATESII.

Pale brown, with a series of oblong subangular black-edged pale spots on the hinder part of the back, which become broader and more distinct as they approach the end of the tail, and with a series of distant small roundish black-edged spots on the lower part of the middle of the body, the hinder spot largest and nearest to the edge of the ventral shield.

Hab. Upper Amazon.

March 13, 1860.—Dr. Gray, F.R.S., V.P., in the Chair.

The following extracts from the ‘Bermuda Royal Gazette’ of Jan. 31st, 1860, relating to the recent capture of a large species of *Gymnetrus* in the Bermudas, were read to the Society :—

“To the Editor of the ‘Royal Gazette.’

“MY DEAR SIR,—As the ichthyological specimen captured by Mr. George Trimmingham, at Hungary Bay, has attracted some public attention, perhaps a short description of the creature in question may prove interesting to your readers. I have therefore much pleasure in forwarding the following particulars.

“Believe me, very truly yours,

“J. MATTHEW JONES, F.L.S.

“The Hermitage, January 26th, 1860.”

“Order ACANTHOPTERYGII. Family CEPOLADÆ.

“Genus *Gymnetrus*.

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“Body attenuate, compressed, naked, tuberculate; cuticle a silvery covering of metallic lustre; length from facial to caudal extremities 16 feet 7 inches; depth, at 14 inches from facial extremity, 9 inches, increasing gradually to near the ventral extremity of the stomach, where it attained its greatest depth of 11 inches, and then decreased by degrees to the caudal termination; width, at the same distance